

# Maine Wild Blueberries



NEW ENGLAND  
Agricultural  
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**A special "THANK YOU" goes to all the Maine Wild Blueberry growers and processors who helped us by completing the wild blueberry surveys during 2005.**

## FINAL 2005 BLUEBERRY PRODUCTION BELOW AVERAGE, PRICES EXPECTED TO RISE

**MAINE WILD BLUEBERRY CROP:** Maine's 2005 wild blueberry crop totaled 58.5 million pounds, an increase of 27 percent above 2004 output, and 27 percent below 2003 production.

The price for processing berries in 2005 is expected to average 60 cents per pound, an increase of fifteen cents from 2004. If realized, this would place the 2005 processing value at \$34.9 million, compared with \$20.6 million the previous year.

Winter kill appeared minimal on Maine's 2005 wild blueberry crop due to adequate snow cover throughout the winter. Cool weather this spring delayed crop development and bloom by one to two weeks. Excessive rainfall in April and May created ideal conditions for blight and mummyberry, which were widespread across the state. Wet weather in May also caused poor, spotty pollination in many areas. Some growers reported good luck with pollination in early June when sunny weather finally arrived in conjunction with a late bloom. By the end of July, the crop was under stress from lack of moisture. Berry size remained small and light yields were reported. Many small growers decided not to

harvest at all this year, citing difficulty in finding rakers this season after the poor 2004 crop.

**NORTH AMERICAN WILD BLUEBERRY CROP:** According to Frank Drummond at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, wild blueberry production in Maritime Canada was expected to decrease in 2005. Growers in Nova Scotia reported final production at 31.5 million pounds, well below their five-year average of 40 million pounds. Problems with disease due to the wet spring and winter kill contributed to reduced yields in Nova Scotia. Prince Edward Island produced 8 million pounds, a slight decrease from 2004, but still above 2003 production. Growers in the Province reported problems with frost and hail during the growing season. Final production data for Quebec, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland was unavailable at the time of publication; however, preliminary forecasts from the North American Blueberry Council suggested the wild blueberry crop in these provinces would be slightly lower than the previous year. Producers in New Brunswick cited poor pollination as the primary reason for reduced production.

### MAINE WILD BLUEBERRIES: Production and Value, 1996 – 2005

Year	Total Production	All Price Per Pound <sup>1/</sup>	Total Value of Production <sup>1/</sup>	Fresh Blueberries <sup>2/</sup>			Blueberries for Processing		
				Production	Price per Pound	Value of Production	Production	Price per Pound	Value of Production
	1,000 Lbs	Cents	1,000 Dollars	1,000 Lbs	Dollars	1,000 Dollars	1,000 Lbs	Cents	1,000 Dollars
1996	59,198	57	33,590	268	--	--	58,930	57	33,590
1997	73,816	43	31,622	276	--	--	73,540	43	31,622
1998	62,981	46	29,166	360	1.00	360	62,621	46	28,806
1999	66,102	51	33,889	300	1.10	330	65,802	51	33,559
2000	110,990	40	44,732	420	1.20	504	110,570	40	44,228
2001	75,200	31	22,945	350	1.40	490	74,850	30	22,455
2002	62,400	29	17,860	400	1.25	500	62,000	28	17,360
2003	80,400	33	26,880	400	1.20	480	80,000	33	26,400
2004	46,000	46	20,970	300	1.35	405	45,700	45	20,565
2005 <sup>3/</sup>	58,500	61	35,370	300	1.50	450	58,200	60	34,920

<sup>1/</sup> All Price per Pound and Total Value of Production for 1996 - 1997 do not include fresh market blueberries.

<sup>2/</sup> Fresh Blueberry Price per Pound and Value of Production are not available before 1998.

<sup>3/</sup> Preliminary Price per Pound and Value of Production. Final price statistics to be published in July, 2006.

Source: **Non-Citrus Fruits and Nuts – Preliminary**, 3:00 p.m. January 24, 2006, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA

The wild blueberry estimating program is funded through a cooperative agreement with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources as a service to growers and others in the industry. The next Maine Wild Blueberries report will be published and available on the Internet at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/nh/> in late July 2006. It will contain the final price statistics for the 2005 crop and the production forecast for the 2006 crop.

## Blueberries: Preliminary Price and Value by Crop, Selected States and United States, 2005 Crop

Crop and State	Total Utilized Production	All Price per Pound	Total Value of Production	Fresh Blueberries			Blueberries for Processing		
				Production	Price per Pound	Value of Production	Production	Price per Pound	Value of Production
<b>2005</b>	1,000 Lbs	Dollars	1,000 Dollars	1,000 Lbs	Dollars	1,000 Dollars	1,000 Lbs	Dollars	1,000 Dollars
<b>Wild Blueberries</b>									
Maine	58,500	0.605	35,370	300	1.500	450	58,200	0.600	34,920
<b>Cultivated Blueberries</b>									
Alabama <sup>1/</sup>	520	0.906	471	520	0.906	471			
Arkansas <sup>1/</sup>	1,350	1.740	2,349	1,350	1.740	2,349			
California <sup>1/</sup>	5,580	4.460	24,886	5,580	4.460	24,886			
Florida <sup>1/</sup>	5,200	6.300	32,760	5,200	6.300	32,760			
Georgia	26,000	1.220	31,820	12,000	1.730	20,760	14,000	0.790	11,060
Indiana	3,500	1.220	4,275	2,000	1.410	2,820	1,500	0.970	1,455
Michigan	66,000	1.270	83,500	25,000	1.700	42,500	41,000	1.000	41,000
New Jersey	45,000	1.230	55,470	33,000	1.310	43,230	12,000	1.020	12,240
New York	1,400	1.400	1,963	1,350	1.420	1,917	50	0.920	46
North Carolina	26,000	1.410	36,702	16,100	1.800	28,980	9,900	0.780	7,722
Oregon	32,400	0.939	30,432	12,000	1.210	14,520	20,400	0.780	15,912
Washington	19,600	0.978	19,160	3,900	1.330	5,187	15,700	0.890	13,973
UNITED STATES	232,550	1.390	323,788	117,850	1.870	219,961	114,700	0.905	103,827

<sup>1/</sup> Small quantities of processed blueberries are included in fresh to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

SOURCE: *Noncitrus Fruits and Nuts – Preliminary*, 3:00 pm January 24, 2006, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA

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